

# *Feast Days*

*Shadows  
of Our Faith*

*Herbert E. Douglass*

# If

you were to wander onto the grounds of a feast-keeping gathering, it's likely that the experience would be uplifting. Being surrounded by passionate, earnest people seeking the Lord with all their hearts and following their convictions is a thought-provoking spiritual experience. But is observing the ancient Israelite festivals mandated by Scripture for Christians today?

Some say they are, insisting that by rejecting them, we're disobeying a direct command of God, while others say they have been nailed to the cross. What is the truth—according to the Bible? Does the church stand in grave danger by rejecting the Feast Days, or has something else replaced them in the New Covenant experience?

This eye-opening book begins its brief but in-depth investigation by first asking, "What saith the Scripture?" What follows is a provocative but biblically informative answer that will challenge you no matter where you stand on the issue. In the end, you'll understand the mind of God more than ever, and be able to serve Him in the place He longs for you to be today.



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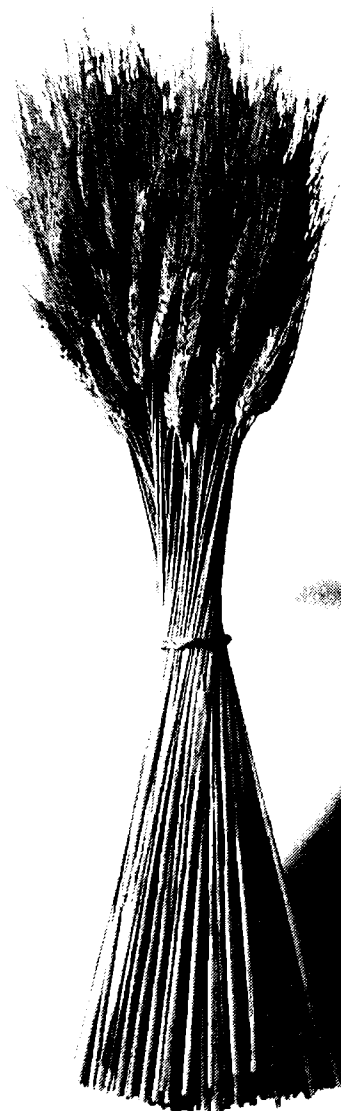
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# CHAPTER ONE

## Why These Pages Have Been Written

If you were to wander onto the grounds of a feast-keeping camp meeting, it is likely that the experience would be uplifting. Being surrounded by passionate, earnest people seeking the Lord with all their hearts and following their convictions is a thought-provoking spiritual experience. But are such gatherings, in observance of ancient Israelite festivals, mandated by Scripture for Christians today?

Some members of many Protestant churches insist that they are. Others say that *Yahweh* and *Yahshua* or *Yeshua* are the only appropriate and respectful names for God and Jesus. What is the truth?

Some Adventists argue that the Seventh-day Adventist Church's outright rejection of Old Testament feast days in deliberate insubordination to God's will, alongside other serious compromises, has brought upon contemporary Adventism God's frown and disfavor. Consequently, they assert, a widespread reform in this area (that is, responding to "God's counsel regarding observing feast days today") would lead the Adventist church to the cusp of long-needed reforms in other areas. Even more specifically, some insist that it is impossible to receive the seal of God or be among the 144,000 unless we observe the Feast days that Jesus observed.

If these assertions are true, the Seventh-day Adventist Church stands in grave danger, and every Seventh-day Adventist should be alarmed at the possible implications. The question each of us must prayerfully ask is, "What saith the Scripture?"

# CHAPTER TWO

## What Was the Purpose of Old Testament Feast Days?

**G**od set up the Israelite economy with two foci: one focused on the holiness of time and the other on the holiness of space. In both time and space, God wanted the Israelites to remember who their God was in contrast to the many deities worshipped by the surrounding nations. Each feast or festival had a particular message to be understood and passed on from one generation to the next. Some were obviously commemorative; that is, they were reminders of great events in Israelite history. But all were types of great events in salvation history.

On that glorious resurrection day, Jesus walked unknown with two discouraged disciples trudging toward Emmaus (Luke 24:13–32). How did Jesus bring light and joy to these dejected men? “He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself” (v. 27). The disciples, so filled with wonder and joy, exclaimed, “Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us” (v. 32)?

What kind of Scriptures did Jesus have? Only what we today call the “Old Testament,” the only “Bible” Jesus or the disciples had. Jesus opened the Old Testament to what the disciples and all the Jewish had read but not understood. They had read with a veil of presuppositions that clouded their understanding—they had constructed their own ideas

as to how the Messiah would come (2 Corinthians 3:14–16). They didn't see the evidence beforehand because they permitted the grand truths of the Feast days to become pure ritual. Only after Jesus unveiled the truth about Himself as taught in the great national Feast days did the disciples see the big picture. He opened the Scriptures and showed how each feast revealed some aspect of His life and death and the grand scope of the plan of salvation.

As we will look later in more detail, Jesus showed them that the Passover and Feast of Unleavened Bread outlined in advance His life and death, a life that never permitted sin to corrupt His character. He revealed that He was the truth embodied in the waving of the first fruits and that the coming Pentecost would dramatically signal its cosmic impact.

Jesus did not leave His disciples with only an understanding of why He lived and died and His role as earth's "First-fruit" (1 Corinthians 15:23). He helped them to see the grandeur in the coming judgment when all that is right and wrong in the world will be fairly open for inspection—evil will not triumph forever! The Feast of Trumpets, in type, focused on the big picture, announcing the cosmic Day of Atonement. And the ritual of the annual Day of Atonement foreshadowed the cosmic day of atonement that would precede earth's final harvest (Revelation 14:15, 16), typified by the Feast of Tabernacles.

With this Emmaus Bible study, Jesus placed the glorious meaning of the Feasts that have meant so much to the Jews for many hundreds of years within the big picture of the plan of salvation. They were great teaching techniques, object lessons, and illustrations that would keep pointing to the grand aspects in the plan of salvation until the Great Controversy is over. But teaching illustrations are pointers and not the message in themselves. To not keep our eyes on what the Feasts were meant to do, that is, to focus on the shadows and rituals,

and not on the substance and glorious meaning, we will truly miss the glorious and simple truths wrapped up in the ministry of Jesus, both on earth and then as High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary (as revealed in the Book of Hebrews).

Here follows the main Israelite feasts or festivals.

- The **Passover Feast** was established shortly before the Hebrews left Egypt (Exodus 12). Each year thereafter on *Abib* 14 (spring time) the Israelite family would commemorate this remarkable event in their history. Originally, the Israelites would offer the sacrificial lamb in their own towns, but when they entered Canaan, the lamb was sacrificed at the central sanctuary (Deuteronomy. 16:5, 6).

What did this feast signify? Israelites remembered God's extraordinary power in redeeming them from Egyptian captivity. But even more, they were learning how God would redeem the faithful from satanic captivity. In each captivity, redemption depended on the death of the innocent sacrifice.

New Testament writers emphasized the typological significance of the Passover feast by identifying Jesus with the Passover (John 1:36). He died during the celebration of the Passover feast (19:14). In fact, Paul spoke plainly in recognizing Jesus as "our Passover ... sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

- The **Feast of Unleavened Bread**, closely related to the Passover, was celebrated from *Abib* 15 to 21. For seven days, Israelites ate unleavened bread, and no leaven was to be found in their homes (Exodus 12:17–20, 34; Leviticus 23: 6–8). As with the Passover, this feast commemorated the night when they left Egypt—in such haste they had no time to prepare leavened bread. The first and last days of this seven-day period were ceremonial

Sabbaths (not the seventh-day Sabbath). This was one of the three pilgrimage feasts when Israelites left their homes and traveled to the sanctuary (Deuteronomy 16:10).

New Testament writers noted the typological significance of this feast: Leaven in this feast symbolized sin, which Christians were to purge out, thus through Christ symbolically becoming a “new lump” (1 Corinthians 5:7, 8).

- **The Wave Sheaf Ceremony**, a ceremony within the Feast of Unleavened Bread, was enacted on *Abib* 16, the second day of this feast. The sheaf of the first fruit of the barley harvest was waved before the Lord, recognizing that the full barley harvest, yet to be gathered in, belonged to Him.

This presentation of the first fruits typified the resurrection of Christ, the “first fruits” of all those who were to be raised from the dead in the resurrection of the faithful (1 Corinthians 15:23). “The slain lamb, the unleavened bread, and the sheaf of first fruits represented the Saviour” (*The Desire of Ages*, 77).

- **The Feast of Weeks** is also called Pentecost (“fiftieth”) because it was celebrated on *Sivan* 6, 50 days after the waving of the first-fruit, barley sheaf on *Abib* 16. This feast closed out the harvest season that was begun with the earlier waving of the barley first fruits. At this feast, the presentation of the first fruits of the wheat harvest symbolized gratitude to God for the grain that would supply their bread needs for the coming 12 months. This Pentecost celebration lasted one day.

New Testament writers recognized the antitypical significance of this feast when the disciples received the baptism of the Holy Spirit during the feast of Pentecost, 50 days after Christ's resurrection (Acts 2:1–4). But something also occurred in the heavenly sanctuary: "The Pentecostal outpouring was Heaven's communication that the Redeemer's inauguration was accomplished. According to His promise He had sent the Holy Spirit from heaven to His followers as a token that He had, as priest and king, received all authority in heaven and on earth, and was the Anointed One over His people" (*The Acts of the Apostles*, 38).

- **The Feast of Trumpets**, the first of the fall feasts (Leviticus 23:23–25), was celebrated in autumn during the seventh month (*Tišri* 1) as a ceremonial Sabbath (not a weekly Sabbath). Although often called the Feast of Trumpets, this might not be the best translation of the Hebrew term. A more accurate translation would emphasize the strong sound of the ram's horn (*shophar*).

Although Leviticus 23:24 describes this feast as a memorial, we are not told what it memorializes. Most probably the feast may have been the annual reminder that God was the Creator and Judge and that they should prepare for the Day of Atonement ceremonies.

This feast is not mentioned in the New Testament, so it is difficult to identify its typological significance. However, assuming the probability noted above, it also seems probable that the references in the Book of Revelation to the seven trumpets are pointing to the end-times and the finishing of the work of Jesus as our Heavenly High Priest. Just as the *shophar* or trumpet announced the solemn Day of Atonement in the Israelite year, so Revelation's trumpets are announcing the solemn Day of Judgment for all on earth.

- **The Day of Atonement**, on the tenth day of *Tišri*, was not a festival. It was a day of fasting for the Israelites (Leviticus 23:29), the most solemn day of the year. It was another ceremonial Sabbath (not a weekly Sabbath) on which no work was to be done.

This special day was not commemorative of any event in Israelite history. Without question, it pointed the Israelite to how God deals with sin. God promises cleansing from sin to the faithful Israelite but condemnation to those who choose to place themselves in conflict with God's will for them.

Daniel pointed to the time when the heavenly sanctuary will be symbolically cleansed, mirroring the cleansing of God's faithful throughout history (8:13, 14). This spiritual cleansing demonstrates that God has been faithful to His promises. Thus, the Day of Atonement for the Israelite foreshadowed the reality of the closing events in the plan of salvation. For us today, we are living in the solemn antitypical Day of Atonement. The reality is now.

- **The Feast of Tabernacles**, celebrated during *Tišri* 15–21, was the last feast of the agricultural year. The harvest was over. Obviously a joyous feast, Israelites gathered at the central sanctuary (Deuteronomy 16:14, 15; Leviticus 23:40; Judges 21:19–21) to express their gratitude. The celebration began with a ceremonial Sabbath (not a weekly Sabbath) and ended with a ceremonial Sabbath.

During the week, Israelites, living in makeshift booths made of palm branches and leafy trees, commemorated the time when their forebears dwelt in tents during their wilderness pilgrimage before entering Canaan (Leviticus 23:40–42).



But the Feast of Tabernacles also anticipated the future harvest of the world when God's faithful from all ages would come together in the grand celebration of gratitude for a wise and caring God (Revelation 14:15, 16). At that time John saw "standing before the throne [of God] and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9).

- In summary, in these various festivals and solemn services, God was revealing important aspects of how He was relating to His people and how His people should best respond as He prepared them to live forever. The spring festivals focused on how God was caring for their spiritual growth—His pardon and power taught in the various sanctuary services; the fall festivals focused on the eschatological fulfillment of the plan of redemption. The typical meaning of these services not only pointed to Jesus and Calvary but also to our Lord's heavenly ministry as High Priest and the final harvest of the world.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Should We Alter Ancient Rituals?

- We must ask: *What was the primary purpose of the three Feasts—Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and Feast of Tabernacles?*

**W**e are told in Leviticus 23:37: “These are the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—**besides** the Sabbaths [weekly, seventh-day Sabbaths] of the Lord, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord.”

Obviously, these Feasts could not be celebrated without offering sacrifices; that is, no feast without a sacrifice. Those today who choose to observe these festivals must create their own personal ways of celebration, thus developing traditions not based on biblical commands.

The weekly Sabbath never had this restriction. The main purpose of the seventh-day Sabbath was to rest from daily duties and devote the day fellowshiping with other believers and communing with God. When the Sabbath was instituted in Eden, God did not ask for the sacrifice of animals. After the establishment of the sacrificial system, God added burnt and drink offerings as part of the sanctuary service (Numbers 28:9, 10).

- *Three Feasts—Feast of Unleavened Bread, Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and Feast of Tabernacles—were to be celebrated at the central sanctuary or temple and not anywhere else in Israel (Deuteronomy 16:16). This specifically required the Israelites to leave home and meet in a central location that promoted solidarity among the Israelites and a public commitment to their God. Even Passover, which began as a family celebration, also became an event connected to the sanctuary or temple (Deuteronomy 16:5).*

After the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in A.D. 70, the Jews determined to keep their feasts in some other way than attending the central sanctuary. Without the insights of the Christian gospel, they felt the need to remember services and festivals that had been part of their national history for centuries. But it was impossible to keep these feasts as they once did. Thus, any attempt to celebrate these feasts today apart from the Israelite Temple would be human decisions not biblically supported.

These three feasts, as we have already seen, also reflected important periods in the Jewish agricultural calendar. Even though Moses outlined the importance and particular aspects of each of the feasts while they were still in their wilderness wanderings, celebrating the Feasts of Weeks (Pentecost) and Tabernacles would obviously wait until they were in the Promised Land and had orchards and farm land to harvest. In fact, Hosea foretold that Israel while in exile would not be able to celebrate the Lord's feasts (9:1–5).

- *Another feature of the Israelite feasts was the close ethnic identity associated with some of the celebrations, especially the Passover. “The Lord said to Moses and Aaron, ‘This is the ordinance of the Passover: No outsider shall eat it. But*

*every man's servant who is bought for money, when you have circumcised him, then he may eat it. A sojourner and a hired servant shall not eat it” (Exodus 12:43–45).*

This may be the reason why the Jews confronted Paul at Antioch. This argument over “circumcision according to the custom of Moses” (Acts 15:1) prompted the need for a church council at Jerusalem to settle the matter, especially regarding Gentile converts. The Jewish Temple in Jerusalem still functioned as the central site for the three feasts. Only when Jewish converts to Christianity understood that Jesus and Calvary fulfilled the purpose of the feasts did the tensions dissipate.

# CHAPTER **FOUR**

## **What Does the New Testament Teach Us About Feast Days?**

**T**he New Testament emphasizes that the sanctuary services of the Old Testament reached their purpose and their end in 1) the life and death of Jesus and in 2) the High Priestly ministry of Jesus in the heavenly sanctuary. The following four texts are most used by those promoting Feast Days in the Christian church:

### **Acts 15**

Acts 15 serves as a crucial moment in the growth of the emerging Christian Church. Distinctions between formal Jewish traditional ceremonies and new ways to look at these conventional practices were hitting head on. The issues were circumcision (15:1, 5, 24), sexual immorality (15:20, 29), and certain dietary restrictions (15:20, 29).

Put yourself in the position of either Paul and his associates or the church leaders in Jerusalem and later Antioch. Apart from a few of its new leaders, the young church generally had not seen clearly that the ceremonial laws pointing to Christ were fulfilled in Him. Nor yet did many see that the ethnic symbols characterizing the Jews as Jews (circumcision) were likewise no longer significant. For decades after the Cross, the young Jewish Christian church by habit celebrated the Feasts in Jerusalem. But God was leading them step by step.

Soon Paul's letters clarified the fulfillment of the sanctuary ceremonies in the life and death of Jesus—which were “shadows” of the Light that had come (Colossians 2:17). But Paul and other Christian leaders *did not include Mosaic statutes (God-given) with Mosaic sanctuary ceremonies (also God-given)*. Further, Paul and Peter made clear that continuing to emphasize conventional ceremonies encouraged the spirit of legalism. Peter summarized it well: “Why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15:10 NKJV)?

James, the de facto leader of the Jewish Christians, after listening carefully to Paul and Peter, expressed the will of the general body: “I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immortality, from things strangled, and from blood” (15:19, 20).

In consensus, these church leaders took this advice and wrote a general letter to Christian groups containing these words: “For it seemed good to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offering to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immortality. If you keep yourselves from these, you do well” (15:28, 29, NKJV).

James and the other leaders had no thought of separating themselves from Jewish synagogues. That was their mission field as Jesus had counseled. Further, they had no division over whether the statutes, in contrast to the ceremonial services, were also mere “shadows” of the Cross. Dietary prohibitions (statutes), for example, still made sense, as did violations of the moral law expressed in the Ten Commandments.

#### **Galatians 4**

“But now after you have known God, or rather are known by God, how is it that you turn again to the weak

and beggarly elements, to which you desire again to be in bondage? You observe days and months and seasons and years. I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain” (4:9–11, NKJV).

The Galatians were largely the product of Paul’s preaching. But in his absence, Jewish teachers were troubling the young church with their emphasis that sanctuary ceremonies and feasts were still obligatory even for Christians. He called this reversion to ceremonies and feasts “weak and beggarly” (4:3, 9). Why? Because they were rushing back into a form of bondage that Peter had declared to the Jerusalem council to be a “yoke on the neck ... which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear” (Acts 15:10).

Then Paul is specific regarding the bondage of “days, months, seasons, and years.” Here he refers to the seven ceremonial Sabbaths and the new moons of the ceremonial system. (There is no basis for assuming that he is including the weekly Sabbaths, for they were never part of the ceremonial system.) *The reference to “seasons” should be literally, “appointed seasons,”*—the annual set festivals of the Jewish religious calendar (Numbers 28:2). “Years” refers to the sabbatical and jubilee years of the Jewish calendar (Exodus 23:10, Leviticus 25:8-12).

Paul was more than a lecturer, more than a skilled theologian. He was pleading for them to fully understand the freedom of the gospel. Listen to his fatherly plea: “I am afraid for you, lest I have labored for you in vain. Brethren, I urge you to become as I am” (4:11, 12).

Paul had once been a Jewish thoroughbred—24-carat! Truly devoted to the Jewish ceremonial services and feast days! But he had given up these customs for two reasons: 1) they led to legalism, and 2) they were only “shadows” of the Light that had come in Jesus. And he wanted his converts, Gentile and Jew, to follow him into the joy of the gospel.



## **Ephesians 2**

“Having abolished in His flesh the enmity, that is, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in Himself one new man from the two, thus making peace” (2:15, 16, NKJV).

Paul wrote his letters to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon about the same time from his first imprisonment in Rome. One can see how Paul worked out his understanding of the gospel as it related to the traditional Jewish ceremonies.

The word “abolished” would be better translated “canceled.” But what did the “enmity” refer to? Of course, the ceremonial laws “contained in ordinances” were canceled at the cross, but the “enmity” could not have been these laws. God gave these laws as “shadows,” but God did not create the enmity by creating these laws. *The enmity was found in the interpretation and burdens with which the Jews had loaded these God-given laws.* For the Gentile interested in the significance of the life and death of Jesus, these Jewish ceremonies were “the middle wall of division” preventing the Gentiles from accepting the Christian message.

The weekly Sabbath was never the issue for either the Jew or Gentile. The Old Testament was their only Bible. The Ten Commandments were sacred to both Jew and Gentile. The Sabbath was never part of “the middle wall.”

When early Jewish Christians first saw the freshness of Christ’s appeal, they thought that becoming a disciple meant adding to their religious rituals their newfound appreciation for Jesus. They thought that the Gentiles who found in Jesus a new way to look at God should join them, rituals and all. All this was on Paul’s mind when he wrote his prison letters.

## Colossians 2

“Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. . . . Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:14–17, NKJV).

Paul mirrors his counsel to the Ephesians (“law of commandments contained in ordinances”) with “handwriting of requirements.” “Wiped out” in Colossians likewise mirrors “abolished” in the Ephesians letter.

“Therefore [that is, because the Jewish rituals have been “wiped out,”] don’t let the Judaizers confuse and judge you regarding ceremonial rituals such as the meal and drink offerings. Nor let them confuse you regarding the festivals [“holyday,” KJV] contained in the ceremonial ordinances such as Passover, the Feasts of Unleavened Bread, First fruits, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, and Tabernacles.”

Nor, as Paul continues, don’t let the Judaizers confuse and judge you regarding any ceremonies linked to the “new moon,” [the first day of each month or new moon day (Numbers 10:10; 28:11)].

The same for the “sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come” (2:17). Paul is making a clear distinction between the weekly Sabbath, the memorial of creation, and the ceremonial sabbaths that were “shadow[s] of things to come.” Shadows have no substance, but they do serve a great purpose—they point out that substance does exist. Think about it—one can’t have a shadow unless you actually exist to cast it! *Jesus is the substance to which all the ceremonial offerings and feast days point.*

Some have argued that the weekly Sabbath is included in the “Sabbath days” mentioned in these verses. Since the Sabbath was not abolished, they argue that it must have been only the sacrificial or ritualistic elements of the Sabbaths and Feast Days that were done away with and not the days themselves. However, the text clearly says that festivals and new moons and sabbaths are a shadow and not just the sacrifices themselves. This is because the ceremonies themselves pointed to Christ and His sacrifice. It is also interesting to note that the word for festival here means particularly the three great festivals where the Jews were required to go to Jerusalem, whereas the sabbaths mentioned seem to refer to all the ceremonial Sabbaths (outside of the weekly Sabbath). Paul was not repeating himself by speaking of both festivals and Sabbaths, but was including all the Jewish ceremonial days and rituals that were shadows of Christ.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## What Are Some of the Arguments for Observing Old Testament Feast Days in Modern Times?

- **Argument A:** *The Battle of Armageddon (Revelation 16:16) is a battle over whose Holy Days we should keep, God's or Satan's.*

This is a stretch. Yes, the Hebrew *meggido* is derived from the Hebrew word *mo'ed*, best translated as “appointed meeting” (Leviticus 23:2, 4, 37; Numbers 29:39). The emphasis is on time. And yes, *har-mo'ed* in Isaiah 14:13, most often translated “mountain of congregation,” or “mountain of assembly,” does focus, in this text, on the Great Controversy between Christ and Satan.

But to stretch these renderings of *mo'ed* into “mount of festivals” is unwarranted. And then to project this new phrase into a last-day issue over who is on God's side or Satan's side is another unwarranted leap.

- **Argument B:** *Nowhere does the Bible say that the feast days were only for the Jews.*

The response is obvious: nowhere does the Bible say that Feast Days were for the Christians after Jesus lived and died. Much to the contrary!

It is more than interesting that John, the last of the apostolic writers, referred to the Feast Days always as Jewish celebrations (see 2:13, 6:4; 7:2, 11:55) ... never as Christian celebrations! Although Paul referred to them, he looked at the Feast Days as occasions for preaching the gospel—see **Argument G**.

- **Argument C:** *When Daniel predicted that an apostate Christian power would think to change times and laws (Daniel 7:25), we should recognize that “times” comes from a Chaldean word meaning “seasons.” Thus, God’s intent for His people to keep His original feasts would be attacked even as the seventh-day Sabbath has been attacked.*

Here it is asserted that “times (seasons) and laws” refer to God’s Holy Days and would all be attacked by apostate powers (inspired by Satan).

However, *zinnim* (Aramaic for “fixed time”) has no reference to Feast Days. In Daniel 1:21, the same Aramaic is used describing how God alone has the prerogative to change “times.” *The emphasis is always on a set time, not on feasts days or seasons.*

- **Argument D:** *In Genesis 1:14, God made the sun and moon “to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons (mo’ed), and for days, and years.”*

When one unfortunately (and without foundation) translates *mo’ed* to be “festival,” there is no end to speculation. Of course, the moon had much to do with the beginning of some of the Feasts, but the emphasis is on the set time for the feast itself, not in respect to its observance. For instance, the first month of the Jewish year begins on the first new moon

after the spring equinox when the first sliver of the moon can be seen.

*Mo'ed* is often used to express the “appointed time”; that is, the “season,” *the time* of the year when birds migrate (Jeremiah 8:7; Genesis 17:21) or when the grapes are ready to be harvested (Hosea 2:9). *Mo'ed* is never used as a mental trigger to think “festival.”

In Psalm 104:19, God’s creative powers are described: “He made the moon for the seasons.” In practice, the moon determines the fixed times called “months.” In other words, *the moon serves a sign of the passage of time.*

- **Argument E:** *Whenever the Old Testament mentions “statutes,” we should think “festivals” and thus “festivals” are to be in effect forever.*

The Old Testament outlines *three forms of “laws”*—1) the Ten Commandments, 2) the sacrificial services, including ceremonial feasts, and 3) the statutes. Most are aware of the distinction between the Ten Commandments and the types and ordinances in the sacrificial system. Few are clear regarding the purpose of the “statutes.”

In 1875, Ellen White wrote a remarkably clear article for the May 6 issue of the *Review and Herald* magazine. In it she reviews the purposes of each of these three forms of “laws”:

“From the creation the [1] moral law was an essential part of God’s divine plan, and was as unchangeable as himself. The [2] ceremonial law was to answer a particular purpose of Christ plan for the salvation of the race. ...

“The law of types [ceremonial laws] reached forward to Christ. All hope and faith centered in Christ until

type reached its antitype in his death. The statutes and judgments [3] specifying the duty of man to his fellow-men, were full of important instruction, defining and simplifying the principles of the moral law, for the purpose of increasing religious knowledge, and of preserving God's chosen people distinct and separate from idolatrous nations.

*“The statutes concerning marriage, inheritance, and strict justice in deal with one another, were peculiar and contrary to the customs and manners of other nations, and were designed of God to keep his people separate from other nations.* The necessity of this to preserve the people of God from becoming like the nations who had not the love and fear of God, is the same in this corrupt age, when the transgression of God's law prevails and idolatry exists to a fearful extent. ...

“In consequence of continual transgression, the moral law was repeated in awful grandeur from Sinai. Christ gave to Moses religious precepts [statutes] which were to govern the everyday life. These statutes were explicitly given to guard the ten commandments. They were not shadowy types to pass away with the death of Christ. They were to be binding upon man in every age as long as time should last. These commands were enforced by the power of the moral law, and they clearly and definitely explained that law.

“Christians who profess to be Bible students can appreciate more fully than ancient Israel did the full significance of the ceremonial ordinances that they were required to observe. If they are indeed Christians, they are prepared to acknowledge the sacredness and



importance of the shadowy types, as they see the accomplishment of the events which they represent. The death of Christ gives the Christian a correct knowledge of the system of ceremonies and explains prophecies which still remain obscure to the Jews. Moses of himself framed no law. Christ, the angel whom God had appointed to go before his chosen people, gave to Moses statutes and requirements necessary to a living religion and to govern the people of God” (emphasis supplied).

In summary, statutes and judgments are not part of either the moral law or of the ceremonial law. They explain and enforce the moral law, but have no apparent relationship with the ceremonial law. They are not shadowy types to end at the cross; they retain their validity as long as time shall last.

Where do we find these statutes and judgments? In Exodus 21 and Deuteronomy 4. They do not typify anything in the plan of salvation; they did not meet their fulfillment at the Cross. They are principles of human conduct. These principles will apply as long as time remains. We today can understand the principle regarding an ox goring someone; today we would think of a dog or our automobile that might injure someone.

Does it not seem strange that Paul and Ellen White would argue so forcefully that the ceremonial law passed away at the Cross but not say a word regarding the Feast Days that some believe now remain? Whatever evidence one may use in support of modern Feast Days, it would have to be very powerful to contradict Paul’s statement that these ceremonial Sabbaths were “shadows of things to come, but the substance is of Christ” (Colossians 2:17). Or to contradict Ellen White’s clear statements about the temporary aspect of the sanctuary services and ceremonial Sabbaths. Or to explain why Ellen

White never said a word about the modern observance of the Feast Days.

Paul's admonition to the Galatians seems appropriate: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage" (5:1).

- **Argument F:** *Because the Feasts are often connected in the same chapters with the weekly Sabbaths, they hang or fall together.*

The weekly Sabbath was established long before Sinai, long before the inauguration of the sanctuary service. It is not a shadow pointing to Jesus and the Cross (Colossians 2:17). In Leviticus 23, some link the weekly Sabbath with the festivals, but in a closer look we see that Moses is clearly distinguishing the weekly Sabbath from the festivals. After noting the special aspects of the weekly Sabbath (verse 3), verse 4 begins: "These [the feasts now to be listed] are the feasts of the Lord, holy convocations which you shall proclaim at their appointed times."

*Further differentiation between the six feasts and the weekly Sabbath occurs in verses 37 and 38 after describing the feasts:* "These are the feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations, to offer an offering made by fire to the Lord, a burnt offering and a grain offering, a sacrifice and drink offerings, everything on its day—*besides the Sabbaths of the Lord*, besides your gifts, besides all your vows, and besides all your freewill offerings which you give to the Lord" (NKJV, emphasis supplied). There is no biblical basis for arguing that the seventh-day Sabbath and the feasts belong together.

Apparently some Jewish converts were still clinging to these sanctuary ceremonies, including the need for

circumcision. Further, they were divisive and judgmental toward those who had either abandoned them (Christian/Jewish believers) or failed to adopt them (Gentile believers).

- **Argument G:** *Paul clearly stated, long after the Cross, in Acts 18:21 that he had to hurry back to Jerusalem in order to “keep this feast (Pentecost).” Further, Paul wrote to the Gentile Corinthians (5:7, 8) that they should “keep the feast” of Passover. It should be noted that Acts 18:21 is omitted in many translations because “textual evidence favors the omission.” (F. D. Nichol, *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, 367).*

Of course, some Christians, including Paul, may have observed certain festivals other than the Passover for whatever reason they thought best (e.g., to use the event for a platform to preach the gospel). But there is no indication that this became a Christian requirement for membership in the new church. After all, God was leading them step by step. They did not see immediately the passing significance of feasts that had been so precious to them prior to Jesus and Calvary.

Other reasons for Paul to hurry back to Jerusalem at the time of a Feast are obvious. Paul’s avowed strategy to win both Jews and Gentiles was revealed in 1 Corinthians 9:19–22. He asserts: “I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are without law (not being without law toward God but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law [Gentiles] ... I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” This portrays his stratagem to convert Jews and Gentiles by openly fitting into their respective culture systems, without denying Christ in the process.

He knew of the impending destruction of Jerusalem, the temple, and the soon termination of Jewish ritual system. Time was swiftly running out for the Jews, and it was not unreasonable that he (and other Jewish Christians looking for practical evangelistic opportunities) would seek to be present at the festivals as an opportunity to maximize their prospective audience. The Feast celebrations would be the ideal platform to proclaim Christ's great antitypical sacrifice and high priestly ministry—the meaning and significance of their six annual celebrations.

Since the Bible is silent regarding the keeping of Israelite feasts after the Cross, it would also be wise for modern Christians to avoid imposing regulations and ceremonies without biblical support.

Some read into a statement from E. G. White that appears, for them, to support the observance of the Feast of Tabernacles today: "Well would it be for the people of God at the present time to have a Feast of Tabernacles—a joyous commemoration of the blessings of God to them. As the children of Israel celebrated the deliverance that God had wrought for their fathers, and His miraculous preservation of them during their journeying from Egypt, so should we gratefully call to mind the various ways He has devised for bringing us out from the world, and from the darkness of error, into the precious light of His grace and truth" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 540).

*What is the author saying?* She is lauding the blessings that the Israelites once enjoyed during this annual festival. Then, she is recommending that Christians also have occasions when in some sense they come together to celebrate the many blessings that they have received from the Lord. For many, the annual camp meetings have served this purpose as do many weekend rallies and retreats. It would be an unfortunate misinterpretation of White to suggest she is urging the Feast of Tabernacles today. The Israelite Feast was a harvest

festival; the Christian's harvest festival will be celebrated before the throne of God (Revelation 7). The celebration will take place after the harvest, not before.

- **Argument H:** *After the Crucifixion and Christ's Ascension, the disciples gathered together to celebrate the Feast of Pentecost. If, as most Christians believe, the festivals were part of the ceremonial law that was done away with at the Cross, why did God choose to honor this Feast by sending His Holy Spirit in such a dramatic way. Obviously, the Feast was not cancelled at the Cross.*

Why did God choose the Jewish Feast of Pentecost to inaugurate the emerging Christian church? Because it was the best time and place where the disciples could launch their missionary outreach. Where else could they have had a greater audience with the memory of Christ's crucifixion still vivid in their minds? Obviously that was God's plan. At no other time could the disciples have made a greater impact on Jews traveling in from many countries who could carry home the good news of their Messiah.

Besides, the disciples had not had time to think through 1) the relationship between the sanctuary types, feasts, and ordinances, nor 2) the glorious freedom of their fulfillment in the life and death of Jesus. Many memories of Pentecost past with all their communal joy and gratitude for God's blessings were soon to be transferred to the blessings opened up by their Lord's crucifixion—but that would take time and perhaps the high-powered mind of Paul.

- **Argument I:** *Malachi 4:4 God tells us to "Remember the Law of Moses, My servant, Which I commanded him in Horeb for all Israel, With the statutes and judgments."*

Exactly! Moses here made a clear distinction between the Ten Commandments and the statutes. Nowhere in the Bible are the statutes given the same authority as the Ten Commandments. Much to the contrary! The statutes were given “to guard the Ten Commandments” (see *Review and Herald*, May 6, 1875, in **Argument E** above).

- **Argument J:** *The Holy Feasts, along with the weekly Sabbath, will be celebrated in Heaven (Isaiah 66:23; Zechariah 14:16).*

One wonders where in these verses one can find a connection with the Israelite feasts! Zechariah is looking forward to the return from captivity and what would have happened if Israel truly had fulfilled their opportunity and mission to be the Light to the Gentiles. Isaiah is doing the same, but we do not find in these texts any reference to the Feast Days.

- **Argument K:** *In Leviticus 23:14, referring to the Feast of First fruits (barley harvest), the Israelites were told that the ceremony “shall be a statute forever throughout your generations in all your dwellings” (NKJV).*

Emphasis rests on the word “forever.” But often in the Bible, the word “forever” does not mean that whatever it is describing will never come to its end (see Exodus 27:21; Leviticus 7:36; 10:9; 17:7; Numbers 10:8; 15:15; 18:23; et al.). A fire comes to its end when whatever it is consuming is burned up, and thus the fire extinguishes itself. Feasts come to their end when what they point to arrives, the type meets antitype, e.g., the sanctuary service meets the life and death of Jesus.

“When the Saviour yielded up His life on Calvary, the significance of the Passover ceased and the ordinance of the Lord’s Supper was instituted as a memorial of the same event of which the Passover had been a type” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 539).

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“Christ was standing at the point of transition between two economies and their two great festivals. He, the spotless Lamb of God, was about to present Himself as a sin offering, that He would thus bring to an end the system of types and ceremonies that for four thousand years had pointed to His death. As He ate the Passover with His disciples, He instituted in its place the service that was to be the memorial of His great sacrifice. The national festival of the Jews was to pass away forever. The service which Christ established was to be observed by His followers in all lands and through all ages” (*The Desire of Ages*, 652).

- **Argument L:** *Jesus kept the various Feasts and as our Example, so should we.*

True, Jesus did attend some of the Feasts at Jerusalem and for good reason. When and where else would He have a better opportunity to draw attention away from the rituals to their significance? In John 2:23, for example, “When He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.”

In John 7, we are told that “the Jews’ Feast of Tabernacles was at hand” (7:2).

What did Jesus do at this time? He told his brothers that He would not be going to Jerusalem with them—it was not yet His time. But later He went to Jerusalem, somewhat



incognito. Knowing that He would have the opportunity to reach Jews from many countries, He made His move in the middle of the feast week—and “taught.” On the last day of the feast, “Jesus stood and cried out, saying, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink.” This was hardly the generally accepted way to worship at the Feast of Tabernacles!

What is going on here? Ellen White provides interesting insights: “As the sons of Joseph made preparation to attend the Feast of Tabernacles, they saw that Christ made no movement signifying His intention of attending. They watched Him with anxiety. *Since the healing at Bethesda He had not attended the national gatherings.* To avoid useless conflict with the leaders at Jerusalem, He had restricted His labors to Galilee. *His apparent neglect of the great religious assemblies,* and the enmity manifested toward Him by the priests and rabbis, were a cause of perplexity to the people about Him, and even to His own disciples and His kindred. In His teachings He had dwelt upon the blessings of obedience to the law of God, and *yet He Himself seemed to be indifferent to the service, which had been divinely established*” (*Desire of Ages*, 450, emphasis supplied).

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“From Jerusalem the report of Christ’s miracles had spread wherever the Jews were dispersed; and although for many months *He had been absent from the feasts*, the interest in Him had not abated. Many from all parts of the world had come up to the Feast of Tabernacles in the hope of seeing Him” (*Desire of Ages*, 451, emphasis supplied).

Obviously, before the Cross, at the times of His choosing, Jesus honored the Feasts and other sanctuary ceremonies that He Himself had given to the Israelites. Throughout His

three years of ministry, however, He was, step by step, teaching the higher meaning of these ceremonies, anticipating the day when they would be superseded by their real significance at His death.

- **Argument M:** *Ellen White “knew and understood the truth” about God’s intention to restore the “observance of the ancient feasts,” but she did not emphasize this truth for two reasons: 1) she always waited for others to study it out so she could confirm them in their Bible study, and 2) this didn’t happen because God in His wisdom knew that it wasn’t the right time.*

Besides being drastic assumptions without foundation, part of the problem lies in the reluctance of some to let Ellen White explain her own use of such key terms such as judgments, statutes, services, precepts, ordinances, laws, rituals, and ceremonies. White defines her own usage of such terms by linking them to the typical Feast Days such as the usage of two key terms 1) “ceremonies” and 2) “types” in relation to the seven days Feast of Unleavened Bread, which followed the Passover:

“The Passover was followed by the seven days’ feast of unleavened bread. On the second day of the feast, the first fruits of the year’s harvest, a sheaf of barley, was presented before the Lord. *All the ceremonies of the feast were types of the work of Christ ... the unleavened bread, the sheaf of first fruits, represented the Saviour*” (*The Desire of Ages*, 77, emphasis supplied).

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“In this ordinance [foot washing], Christ discharged his disciples from the cares and burdens of the

ancient Jewish obligations in rites and ceremonies. These no longer possessed any virtue; for type was meeting antitype in himself, the authority and foundation of all Jewish ordinances that pointed to him as the great and only efficacious offering for the sins of the world. ...

“If his disciples had not needed this, it would not have been left for them as Christ’s last established ordinance in connection with, and including, the last supper. It was Christ’s desire to leave to his disciples an ordinance that would do for them the very thing they needed, that would serve to disentangle them from *the rites and ceremonies which they had hitherto engaged in as essential, and which the reception of the gospel made no longer of any force. To continue these rites would be an insult to Jehovah.* Eating of the body, and drinking of the blood, of Christ, not merely at the sacramental service, but daily partaking of the bread of life to satisfy the soul’s hunger, would be in receiving his word and doing his will” (*Review & Herald*, June 14, 1898, emphasis supplied).

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“The Jews had prided themselves upon their divinely appointed services; and they concluded that as God once specified the Hebrew manner of worship, it was impossible that He should ever authorize a change in any of its specifications. *They decided that Christianity must connect itself with the Jewish laws and ceremonies. They were slow to discern to the end of that which had been abolished by the death of Christ... in which type had met its antitype, rendering valueless the divinely appointed ceremonies and sacrifices of the*

*Jewish religion*” (*The Spirit of Prophecy*, Vol. 3, 370, emphasis supplied).

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“There are two distinct laws brought to view. *One is the law of types and shadows, which reached to the time of Christ, and ceased when type met antitype in his death.* The other is the law of Jehovah, and is as abiding and changeless as his eternal throne. ... Hence *the ceremonial law ceased to be of force at the death of Christ*” (*The Signs of the Times*, July 29, 1886, emphasis supplied).

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“But there is a law which was abolished, which Christ ‘took out of the way, nailing it to his cross.’ Paul calls it ‘the law of commandments contained in ordinances.’ This *ceremonial law, given by God through Moses, with its sacrifices and ordinances,* was to be binding upon the Hebrews *until type met antitype* in the death of Christ as the Lamb of God to take away the sin of the world. Then *all the sacrificial offerings and services were to be abolished.* Paul and the other apostles labored to show this, and resolutely withstood those Judaizing teachers who declared that Christians should observe the ceremonial law” (*Signs of the Times*, Sept. 4, 1884, emphasis supplied).

- **Argument N:** *Ellen White is explicit in connecting the Feast Days with the Ten Commandments.*

We look in vain for these statements. Some refer to *The Ministry of Healing*, 277–284. These pages are explicitly emphasizing the “statutes,” one of the three “laws” that God gave

through Moses to the Israelites—especially the statutes concerning disease prevention, personal cleanliness, diet, personal discipline, health benefits of rejoicing, etc. These principles were to pervade all aspects of their lives wherever they were living.

These statutes, as we discussed above, were designed to “guard the Ten Commandments.” Thus, “God gave to Israel instruction in all the principles essential to physical as well as to moral health, and it was concerning these principles no less than concerning those of the moral law that He commanded them to [observe faithfully]” (*The Ministry of Healing*, 283). *Statutes were never on the same level as the Ten Commandments—they were meant to “guard” and “apply” the principles of the Ten Commandments.*

For instance, these particular statutes would have guarded the commandment against “killing”—both murder and slow suicide by neglecting a proper diet and personal hygiene. We can easily see how these statutes would encourage young and old to develop self-control and to remember whom it is they should put first in their lives.

In summary, if God’s people had remembered the Ten Commandments given to Adam and observed by Abraham, if they had remembered the covenant made with Abraham, circumcision would never have been instituted and there would have been no necessity for the Ten Commandments to be proclaimed on Sinai. God’s people would have kept His law in their mind as Abraham did and there would have been no need for the additional “statutes” or directions given to Moses to “guard” and “amplify” the Ten Commandments. The ceremonial system was present in practice, unfolding in particulars, as conditions warranted, since the slaying of the first lamb in Eden and in Abel’s example. But the ceremonial system with its Feast Days fulfilled its purpose in the life and death of Jesus (See *Patriarchs and Prophets*, 364, 365).

- **Argument O:** *The Feast Day services were devised to specifically remind us of the solemnity of the seventh-day Sabbath.*

It would be interesting to see what biblical instruction would be used to substantiate this argument. The reasoning seems to be that if Adventists are clear on the perpetuity of the seventh-day Sabbath, they should also be equally clear on the perpetuity of the Feast Days, which they argue belong equally to the same package for all time to come.

- **Argument P:** *The seventh-day Sabbath is a feast day and thus provides an added reason why all the other Feast Days should be observed as well in the Christian Church.*

This, of course, is another way to restate what has been said before. The only basis for this argument is in Leviticus 23:1–4. These four verses are re-emphasized in verses 37 and 38: after reciting the “feasts of the Lord which you shall proclaim to be holy convocations,” the singular exception to these feasts is further emphasized, “*besides the Sabbaths of the Lord.*” Verse 3 is thrown in *parenthetically* between verse 2 and verses 4–37 where the six Feast Days (including the Passover with the Feast of Unleavened Bread) are described. It seems that Moses wanted to make sure that the Israelites clearly understood that the weekly Sabbaths were distinct and apart from the ceremonial sabbaths and other ordinances.

# CHAPTER SIX

## How Should We Address God? (The Claims of the “Sacred Name Movement”)

Some today charge that Christians show disrespect, even blaspheme the names for deity, when they (in English) use terms such as *Lord*, *God*, or *Jesus* in their prayers, speech, and Bible translations. They claim that we should use only the Hebrew terms, such as, *Yahweh* (for God the Father), *Yahshua* or *Yeshua* (for Jesus).

### Is There Any Validity to These Claims?

New Testament writers never used *Yahshua* or *Yeshua* for their Lord and Saviour. They preached and wrote about the Lord Jesus (*Kurios Iēsous*) in most if not all of their letters written to Jews who were closer to the Hebrew Old Testament than we are today (These two Greek words were used together 115 times, including Luke 24:3; Acts 8:6; 16:31; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:3; 1 Thessalonians. 1:1; and Philemon. 3:8). In other words, it would be strange for Christians today to do something that the apostles never did!

Would it not be even stranger to suggest that Jesus Himself did not understand how to address God? Remember Mark's recording (Mark 15:34) of our Lord's cry on the cross, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?* ... My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” *Eloi* is a Greek transliteration of

the Aramaic *Elahi*, which is a transliteration of the Hebrew *Eli* of Psalm 22:1, a Psalm that is generally believed to be a Messianic Psalm that foreshadowed certain aspects of our Lord's life on earth. According to some today, Jesus should have cried out, "*Yahweh, Yahweh!*"

How did Jesus refer to God? As His *Πάτερ* ("Father"—Matthews 6:9, John 17:1, 5, 11, 21, 24, 25). In Mark 14:36 Jesus used *Abba*, the Aramaic word for "father." Paul also referred to our Heavenly Father as *Abba* (Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:16). Surely, Jesus and Paul would have given us safe examples of how to address God.

Now the argument over *Yahweh* (YHWH) takes us down a different road. For centuries past, Jews refused to pronounce YHWH for fear of blaspheming God's name.

So what did the Jews do when they read the Hebrew Scriptures in public? It is interesting to note that the ancient Hebrew Scriptures contained only consonants; the reader supplied the vowels so that the words could be sounded. (Try reading the previous sentence minus the vowels—it can't be done unless you supply the vowels from memory!).

Whenever YHWH (consonants only) appeared in the text to be read, the Jewish reader sounded out a different Hebrew word, '*Adonai* (Lord). About the seventh or eighth century A.D., when Hebrew seemed to be dying out as a spoken language, the Masoretes (Jewish scholars) devised a system of written vowels that they inserted into the consonants of the Hebrew words. But something interesting occurred. They preserved the ancient custom of not pronouncing YHWH by inserting the vowels for '*Adonai*. What happened? The Jewish reader saw the vowels for '*Adonai*, the signal to pronounce YHWH as if they were reading '*Adonai!*'

Getting this all translated into English became the next challenge. Many English translators, for whatever reasons,



settled on the name “Jehovah.” In other words, scholars have no conclusive evidence as to how to pronounce YHWH today.

We can look at the name for God in the Old Testament from another direction. How does God refer to Himself? YHWH appears 5,500 times in the Old Testament, but God also uses other words in identifying Himself. For example, *‘El Shaddai* (“Almighty God,” Genesis 17:1; six times in Genesis and 31 times in Job). *‘Elohîm* (appears more than 2,500 times and plural in form) was first used in Genesis 1:1, referring to God as Creator and suggesting strength, power, and ability. *‘El*, the simple and probably the earlier reference to God, is used more than 200 times and often found in compound words such as Beth-el (“house of God”) and Dani-el (“God is my judge”).

The Greek translators of the Hebrew Bible (Septuagint version, 150–250 B.C.) translated *‘El Shaddai* and *‘Elohîm* as *Theos* and YHWH as *Kurios*.

English translators most often render *‘Elohîm* as God and YHWH as Lord.

One of the side issues that troubles some is the argument that Christians should address the deity by His Hebrew name and avoid such terms as “Lord,” “God,” or even “Jesus.” They believe that by using “Lord,” “God,” or “Jesus,” we are hallowing the names of mythological deities. Thus we are worshipping in the name of pagan gods! But there is a total lack of evidence for this allegation.

In summary, no one today knows how YHWH was meant to be pronounced. We do know Jews for centuries pronounced it *Adonai*, which in English means “Lord.” We also know that the Old Testament writers used other names for God such as *‘El Shaddai* and *‘Elohîm*. Surely they would know better than to use pagan names with pagan meanings. No proof exists that our New Testament was first written in Aramaic. Why

would the apostles write in Aramaic for Grecian audiences? On the contrary, they wrote and preached in the name of the Lord Jesus (Kurios Iēsous). When Jesus spoke of God, He called Him “Father.”

We are all safer when we follow the example of biblical writers when we refer to God and to Jesus.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## **How Do These Issues Relate to the Adventist Mission and Message?**

- Adventists are always safer when they rely on creditable scholarship. Careful analysis of the biblical text and the writings of Ellen White always produce a fair, common sense solution to biblical questions, especially those issues that tend to suggest “new light.” Of course, truth unfolds as time goes on. But unfolding truth does not argue with previously revealed truth. Speculation has a thousand daughters and all lead to fractured, unconnected conclusions.
- Adventists place great weight on the Great Controversy Theme (GCT)—a theme that pervades the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. This theme highlights the conflict between God’s people and all others through the centuries that try to destroy the truths that God has revealed through His prophets. The GCT has one overriding goal—the vindication of God’s character and His way of running the universe. This vindication includes the unfolding of truth in the life and death of Jesus and in the lives of those who commit themselves to re-present their Lord in word and deed. The word that sums up the GCT is “restoration.” More than forgiveness, restoration blends the pardon and power of the gospel and produces people who can be entrusted with eternal life.

- Thus, any “new light” should in some way enhance this major thrust of the Adventist message. Adventists have been called to fulfill the intent of the messages symbolized by the three angels of Revelation 14. They are called to worship “God and give glory to Him.” How is that done? By reflecting His character as Jesus did (John 17). His glory is not especially in His Name but in what that Name represents and how it is reflected in His people.
- The primary task of the Adventist Church is to prepare people for translation, not merely to live 10 years longer. Thus, their highest daily concern is to let the Lord’s Prayer be played out in their lives: cheerfully, compliantly letting God’s will be done in their lives as it is done by angels in heaven; soberly asking the Holy Spirit to “lead them not into temptation,” for if He does not deliberately step into their lives, they know they will fall back into neural paths of self-indulgence and pride; meaningfully pleading with the Holy Spirit to deliver them from even unconscious habits of evil that spring forth almost spontaneously when tempted or irritated—all these daily needs will keep Adventists from concentrating time and money on side issues that are not biblically based.
- Adventists are gracious people who inclusively widen their tents for all who conscientiously hold certain views that may differ from others in the church—views that do not conflict with the basic and essential teachings of the church. They also know that, at times, certain personal views can become divisive if promoted publicly. History has taught Adventists that genuine “new truth” has its

own way of gaining the acceptance of other serious Bible students when sound hermeneutical principles are observed. Truth does prevail.



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